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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-fourth session
Item 18 of the preliminary list*
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

Letter dated 23 June 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement on Western Sahara issued on 21 June 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 18 of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dieter KASTRUP
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/54/50.

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement on Western Sahara issued on 21 June 1999
by the Presidency of the European Union

The European Union reiterates its full support for the Settlement Plan proposed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Western Sahara, which aims at the holding of a free, fair and impartial referendum to give effect to the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

The European Union welcomes the agreements reached after six months of intensive discussions on the proposals of the Secretary-General concerning the further steps to be taken to implement the Settlement Plan. The member States of the European Union hope that the proposals can now be implemented without further delay in line with the deadlines set out in the Secretary-General's report of 28 April 1999. In this context the European Union would like to underline its expectation that the appeals process will be conducted in accordance with both the operational guidelines and the provisional schedule for the implementation of the Settlement Plan.

The European Union calls upon both parties to fully cooperate throughout the voter identification and the appeals process.

The European Union expresses its full support for the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Ambassador Eagleton, as well as for the new deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Robert Kinloch, and for the new chairman of the Identification Commission, Mr. Eduardo Vetere. On this occasion the European Union would like to express its appreciation for the unceasing efforts of Mr. Kinloch to continue the identification process.

The European Union stresses that the return of the refugees in accordance with the principles of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is a key element of the Settlement Plan. The European Union therefore welcomes the ongoing talks of both parties with the Office of the High Commissioner and hopes that these consultations will soon lead to the conclusion of agreements which will allow the taking of the necessary measures for the return of the refugees.

The European Union seizes this opportunity to recall its request for the drawing-up of recommendations for confidence-building measures. In this context, the European Union would also like to underline the continuing plight of the prisoners of war, especially of those in urgent need of medical treatment. The European Union expresses its hope that all parties concerned will do their utmost in order to find a solution to this humanitarian problem in the near future and restates its full support for the efforts undertaken in this connection by the International Committee of the Red Cross.